

## **NAS Report - Missouri River Ecosystem**

The National Research Council of the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) on Jan. 9 published its report: The Missouri River Ecosystem: Exploring the Prospects for Recovery.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers jointly requested the NAS to assess the current state of the science on the Missouri River and the potential for adaptive management strategies for restoration of the Missouri River ecosystem. We appreciate the work the Academy did at our request. It provides valuable information as to the challenges of addressing the ecological issues on the Missouri and the importance of appropriate institutional arrangements to advance that effort.

Although the report recognizes there is an extensive body of scientific research on the Missouri River ecosystem dating back to 1804, it indicates the research has not been adequately synthesized, the studies have tended to focus on specific species or portions of the river, and therefore existing studies are only a starting point for future management choices.

NAS recommends that the Corps call for a moratorium to the Missouri River Master Manual process. However, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) has issued a biological opinion that places three species in jeopardy. As written, this biological opinion along with the Endangered Species Act offers the Corps no choice but to continue the Master Manual revision process. With regard to the report's conclusions on the state of the science on the Missouri River, the Corps will continue to coordinate with USFWS and other stakeholders as development of the manual progresses.

The report also recommends the formation of a regional-federal stakeholder group to immediately begin to develop and implement an adaptive management program designed to improve the conditions of the Missouri River ecosystem.

The Corps of Engineers seeks a sustainable Missouri River system that fulfills the multiple purposes for which the Missouri River projects were authorized and is fully committed to seeking a broad range of inputs as we pursue our process. The Corps remains committed to develop a final Environmental Impact Statement in May 2002 and a final Record of Decision in October 2002.

Details of the Corps' Missouri River Management Plan and the National Research Council Missouri River Report are available at: <http://www.nwd-mr.usace.army.mil/mmanual/mast-man.htm>

For more information.. [NAS Report Missouri River Ecosystem Q and A](#)